

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

duals, but for their work. Hierarchy is so powerfully ingrained that a *congtm* automatically takes on the rank of her lover, and if he is influential she may acquire a proportionate hold over those who do business with hiiBj and no one may approach him without appropriate gifts to her. Frenchwomen have been unnecessarily unfair to their Asiatic rivals: it is unjust to judge them apart from their setting. They have no reason to love their European masters who take them and thai abandon them. Money is the sum and substance of their attraction, and the European whose vanity leads him to think that his *congaie* is the exception to the rule of infidelity only makes himself ridiculous. Hie European Don Juan's code of male morality has found its supreme revenge in the Oriental woman. The *ccmgcde* whose weeping for her dead or departed lover is graded according to the effect it has upon spectators, among whom may be a potential substitute, is far nearer the reality than Loti's Madame Chrysanthe, If one understands the position of women in Annamke society one is no longer shocked by their passivity and limitations, Their perpetual submission to the will of others, their indifference to passion, their importance, based entirely on their son-bearing activities—all have reduced their role to that of dray-horses and mothers, catering to masculine needs. The aristocratic native woman is a recluse whom the European never sees, so generalizing about all Annamite women from Ms own *congme* is not only a profound insult to them but a source of grave error. The *congme* has undeniably good qualities: her business opacities are well above native men's, her passion for gaming at least equal, and her need for ornamentation superior—hence her

European lover must see that she does not secretly
deplete his ex-
chequer* A *ctmgme* is an excellent institution if kept
in her place. **If**
she has the defects of courtesans the world over, she
has exceptional
dams. She removes the compulsory from love, but
a fake trans-
of European idealism transforms her into a nuisance
and a

have not experienced to the same degree an attraction
mm. The racial charm of native women seen as
when seen in their male compatriots: their
diminutive
nd **hair** do not make for attractive virility. In
the colony

there is **to** prejudice, and too few
Frenchwomen, namely-
catty, **a** choice among **their** own kind. Yet
in France
the of Ammoujthe stideBfe¹ wMi .Frenchwomen is
notable.